

E 255

. B 98

E 255

B 98

## UNION, SECESSION, ABOLITION

AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE CAREERS OF WEBSTER, CALHOUN, SUMNER

Two opposing principles strove for mastery in the formation of our Constitution—one to make us a nation, the other a confederacy of nations. Neither principle was victorious—both are in the Constitution—working together, often not as brothers, but as a badly matched team. Sometimes one principle has been in the ascendancy, sometimes the other—sometimes they have been in deadly conflict. In the organization of the government under Washington the national principle was in the ascendant. Hamilton was master. The great departments were formed on the national principle. But the act of the new Congress of special value to the national sentiment was the judiciary, which in effect made the national judiciary the final arbiter on all questions that could come before it. No other act of Congress had so much influence as this in consolidating the Union. In after times Calhoun saw this, and bitterly lamented it—indeed, would have repealed the law, but it was too firmly anchored in the Constitution, being an act of the fathers. If anything was wanting to make this act effective, that want was supplied by the appointment to the Supreme bench of John Marshall. His long and illustrious career on the bench was devoted with a single eye to the founding of a nation.

In 1798 even Jefferson could write: "If on a temporary superiority of one party the other is to resort to a scission of the Union, no federal government can ever exist. If, to rid ourselves of the present rule of Massachusetts and Connecticut, we break the Union, will the evil stop there? Suppose the New England States alone cut off, will our nature be changed? Are we not men still to the South of that and with all the passions of men? Immediately we shall see a Pennsylvania and a Virginia party arise in the residuary confederacy, and the public mind will be distracted with the same party spirit. What a game, too, will the one party have in their hands by eternally threatening the other, that, unless they do so and so, they will join their Northern neighbors.

If we reduce our Union to Virginia and North Carolina, immediately the conflict will be established between the representatives of these two States, and they will end by breaking into their simple units.

the house of Peers in 1775, that "the art of casting cannon had been carried to great perfection in the colonies."

Mention was made above of certain *brass* guns as cast in Bridgewater. Probably every furnace, which had plenty of brass, may have experimented in that style of manufacture. There is now in the arsenal at Hartford, Connecticut, a brass cannon inscribed "B. Hanks, 1790." In that year the casting of brass cannon was commenced in Waterbury. Can any Connecticut brass piece be shown to have originated at an earlier era? But it was in Pennsylvania that most brass guns seem to have been turned out. Two brass guns made for the government were tested at the Reading furnace in December, 1776. One burst, and the other stood the test well. In November, 1776, the Pennsylvania Council of Safety had spent more than £77 on their brass cannon foundry, and in the first days of 1777, General Knox, writing from Morristown, inquires whether brass pieces were in making at Philadelphia—and urges exertions to forward the business to the utmost. He even sends a draft or drawing of a howitzer in his camp, as it was intended to cast some of the same sort in Philadelphia. The council appointed a commission to engage experts in casting brass ordnance, and authorized them to draw on the treasurer for all the necessary expenses. On June 16th of that year, James Byers, who had cast brass guns for the government, was ordered to hold himself in readiness to remove with his apparatus at a moment's warning on the approach of the British. On August 19, he asks to be allowed to use State copper—which came from a mine on French creek and made bronze-work easier in Pennsylvania than in most provinces. In the Fourth of July procession of 1788 in Philadelphia, there was a car which bore a furnace in full blast, that finished a three-inch brass howitzer on the way, which at the halting-place was mounted and fired.

Seeing specimens of American artillery created in the first years of the war, the royal leaders might have learned a lesson from Milton's angels. Those celestials battling with devils who had extemporized similar hollow engines, would have retired from the field, as Milton says, but for their power to pluck up mountains and bury those machines deeper than the mines where their ores had been digged.

James O. Butler.

ing the war. Before the close of that contest cannon were also cast in Abington. Cannon for the Revolutionary navy came from Hope furnace, in the town of Scituate, Rhode Island. The Connecticut council of safety, before the war had long continued, expended £1,450 on a furnace in Salisbury to cast cannon, and employed a corps of fifty-nine men to conduct it. The furnace of a tory in Lakeville, Litchfield county, was made to produce large quantities of cannon for the continental army. There is documentary evidence that at least these six New England towns indicated their rebelliousness in thunderous tones. It is hard to find any single town in New York which can make this boast, though the Sterling works in Orange county had cast cannon in the earlier French war, and perhaps did in the later struggle. New Jersey has a better record. Her furnaces in Morris county, at Hibernia and Mount Hope, were noted as yielding the ordnance of which the army of Washington had such pressing need. In Pennsylvania during the Revolution, Warwick furnace was very active in casting cannon, some of which were buried when the British drew nigh in 1777. The owner of Elizabeth furnace in Lancaster county, in payment for sundry great guns, received German prisoners, at one time forty-two and at another twenty-eight, at £30 per head. He had discovered that they knew better how to make guns than how to use them. Cornwall, now the oldest charcoal furnace in the Union, also yielded its quota of Revolutionary ordnance, and the owner of the Reading works, after a few experiments, made an output of one new gun every day. No state but Pennsylvania can clearly show four cannon-casting establishments in our first great struggle. Near Baltimore, however, cannon were cast in 1780, at Northampton, and from Ridgeley's furnace near it small cannon had been ordered by Congress in 1776. In the next year the Hughes Brothers, in Frederick county, furnished a thousand tons of cannon, for which they were paid \$30,666.

In Virginia the only cannon foundry, so far as known, was at Westham, six miles above Richmond, and destroyed by Arnold in 1781. As to North Carolina, there were iron-works on Deep run, for two years' use of which in casting ordnance, etc., the provincial congress were ready to pay £5,000. In South Carolina Colonel Hill cast cannon for Revolutionary whigs at his iron-works, which so enraged the tories that they burned them. This burning cut the patriots to the heart so that one of their Scotch ministers said in his prayer: "Good Lord! if ye had na suffered the cruel tories to burn *Belly Hell's* [Billy Hill's] iron-works, we would na have asked any mair favors at thy hands. Amen!" These particulars attest the truth of the assertion of Governor Penn of Pennsylvania, when before

From Magazine of American History

v 18.

1887 September.

James T. Parton

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 800 514 4

## OUR REVOLUTIONARY THUNDER

A cannon which had seen service throughout the Revolution was afterward, by order of Congress, inscribed, "The Hancock." This is one of four guns which constituted the whole train of field artillery possessed by the British colonies of North America at the commencement of the war, 19th April, 1775. Some weeks after that date, when General Ward took command of the army besieging Boston, he found only one six pounder and half a dozen three pounders. The revolutionists, however, soon captured the guns in most of the royal forts, securing a greater booty than anywhere else at Ticonderoga. But for the two hundred pieces there captured, the siege of Boston must have been a fiasco. Whenever Gage heard a Yankee battery he must have said, "That's my thunder!"

Yet not many field guns—only six at Trenton—were taken from the British before the surrender of Burgoyne, two years and a half after fighting began. Eleven pieces were lost at Brandywine. Running the British blockade with guns bought abroad was tedious, hazardous, and ruinously expensive. Accordingly, there was no more unexpected, rude awakening in the war to British ears than the roar of so many American cannon. "Where do you get your big guns?" was asked of a Massachusetts prisoner in England. His answer was, "We make them ourselves." The next question was, "Where did you get your patterns?" He is said to have replied, "From Burgoyne at Saratoga." He might have mentioned earlier models obtained at Ticonderoga and elsewhere.

The question where our Revolutionary thunder came from has not been fitly met by historians. We rise from Bancroft and Hildreth ready to exchange a good deal of the one's pessimism and the other's optimism for a chapter we do not find, on the domestic manufacture of Revolutionary artillery. Hence the following details cannot be thought beneath the dignity of history.

Three or four Massachusetts foundries turned out Revolutionary cannon. One was at Bridgewater. Here, Hugh Orr, whose establishment had already a quarter of a century's standing, produced a great number of iron and several pieces of brass ordnance from three to thirty-two pounders. These pieces were cast solid and bored—a novelty. In Springfield the government works were begun in 1778, and some cannon were cast there dur-



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 800 514 4

